

chromatic dispersion greater than 1 for this wavelength, four-wave mixing losses are minimized. There is no disclosure or suggestion anywhere in Bickham et al. regarding the use of a positive dispersion at this wavelength region.

Based on this difference, applicants assert that Bickham et al. cannot be found to "anticipate" the subject matter of the present invention as defined by rejected independent claims 1 and 18, or the remaining claims that depend therefrom. Applicants thus respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider this rejection and find claims 1-4 and 18-22 to be in condition for allowance. If for some reason or other the Examiner does not believe that the case is ready to issue and that an interview or telephone conversation would further the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Jablonowski et al.

By: Wendy W. Koba
Wendy W. Koba
Reg. No. 30509
Attorney for applicants
610-346-7112

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